

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) An aqueous composition, comprising:

(1) a metal salt having a solubility product in water at 25°C of 1.0×10^{-7} or less,

(2) an emulsifier having an HLB of 6 to 10, and

(3) water,

wherein the metal salt is dispersed in water;

wherein the metal salt comprises fine particles having an average particle size of 0.05 to 1 μm ;

wherein the emulsifier comprises a diglycerol fatty acid ester and an amount of the emulsifier is 0.5 to 50 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the metal salt;

wherein the emulsifier does not include enzymatically decomposed lecithins; and

wherein a monoester content of the diglycerol fatty acid ester is 50% by weight or more.

14. (Previously Presented) A powder composition which is obtained by a process comprising drying the aqueous composition of claim 13.

15. (Previously Presented) The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the metal salt is a salt of at least one member selected from the group consisting of calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc.

16. (Previously Presented) The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the metal salt is selected from the group consisting of calcium carbonate, calcium phosphate, magnesium phosphate, magnesium oxide, ferric pyrophosphate, zinc hydroxide, zinc pyrophosphate, zinc oxide and dolomite having a $\text{MgCO}_3 \cdot \text{CaCO}_3$ composition.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the

HLB of the emulsifier is from 6 to 9.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the HLB of the emulsifier is from 7 to 9.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the amount of the emulsifier is from 1 to 40 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the metal salt.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the amount of the emulsifier is from 5 to 30 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the metal salt.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The aqueous composition according to claim 13, wherein the monoester content of the diglycerol fatty acid ester is 70% by weight or more.

23. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 13.

24. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the powder composition of claim 14.

25. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 15.

26. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 16.

27. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 18.

28. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 19.

29. **(New)** A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 20.

30. (New) A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 21.

31. (New) A food or beverage, comprising the aqueous composition of claim 22.